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COURTESY FIELD MUSEUM

THE OBBA OF THE BENI, KING OF A NIGERIAN TRIBE (Bulletin No. 3), RESTS HIS ARM ON AN ATTENDANT. A CLOTH KEEPS ROYAL FLESH FROM TOUCHING COMMON.

Bulletin No. 1, December 11, 1950

Nepal, Gurkha Land, Guards Doorway to India

THE Kingdom of Nepal has marshalled its best-known "natural resource" —the fierce Gurkha soldier—to guard isolated mountain ramparts adjoining Tibet, where Chinese communist troops are reported.

Nepal is a small country only 500 miles long and 100 miles wide. Yet it is important as a "buffer state" between India and Tibet along the awesome heights of the Himalayas. Pro-Western in its ties, the ancient kingdom is now being subjected to a menacing propaganda barrage from communist China. Internal unrest has resulted.

"Every Man Is a Soldier"

As the homeland of the Gurkha warrior caste, Nepal has contributed thousands of volunteers to the British and Indian armies. They have won many decorations for bravery and efficiency in big wars and small.

The independent kingdom has been known as a land "where nearly every man is a soldier." Since 1768 the various tribes of Nepal have been ruled by the warlike Gurkhas. Upper class titles are modeled on Western military rank. Although the nation itself has lived in peace for many years, Nepal maintains a standing army estimated at 50,000—relatively large in proportion to a population of less than 7,000,000.

The country has remarkable geographic contrasts. In the south, bordering India, a malarial belt of lowlands annually is ravaged by monsoon floods from silt-laden rivers which rise in the mountains and empty into India's sacred Ganges. Beyond the lowlands rise the Siwalik Mountains and further north tower the great Himalayas. Mt. Everest, highest mountain in the world at 29,002 feet, rises on Nepal's north border.

The heart of the kingdom is a small central valley containing the surprisingly modern capital of Katmandu. It is a city of broad macadamized streets, impressive temples, and white stucco palaces housing government offices and important officials. Here are found the only automobiles and motor roads in the nation. The city is so isolated that it can be reached only by a difficult mountain pass. Automobiles must be transported to the capital on shoulder-high platforms borne by coolies.

Opened to Westerners Since World War II

Nepal is unique in having hereditary prime ministers. They are members of the powerful Rana family and have complete power. The king is titular and spiritual leader but has no actual authority. A current attempt to regain power is being made by the king and Congress Party.

In the past nearly all foreigners in Nepal have been restricted to the inner valley. However, since World War II the Nepal government has encouraged greater Western contacts. A 1948 scientific expedition sponsored by the National Geographic Society, Yale University, and the Smithsonian Institution was permitted free access to outlying areas. Dr. S. Dillon Ripley, ornithologist and expedition leader, bagged a rare spiny babbler, the first such bird to be obtained in 106 years.

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CHAUVELOT FROM CHRISTIAN DE CATERS

WOMEN ON SAO TOMÉ, THE CHOCOLATE ISLAND IN THE GULF OF GUINEA (Bulletin No. 3), TURN CACAO BEANS TO DRY IN THE EQUATORIAL SUN

Here are candy bars and chocolate milk shakes in the making. On the Portuguese-owned island, jungles are cut down and cacao plantations take their place.

Bulletin No. 2, December 11, 1950

Florida Looks for Lost French Colony Site

ON THE banks of the sunlit St. Johns River in Florida, Uncle Sam will undertake a "prospecting" expedition for long-vanished traces of a French settlement which preceded North Carolina's "Lost Colony," the first English attempt to colonize America, by two decades.

Fort Caroline, object of the search, was pillaged and put to the torch by Spanish conquistadores in 1565. Congress has authorized the Department of Interior to acquire a site of almost 100 acres near Jacksonville, where eventually either a national historical park or a state park will commemorate the settlement. Meanwhile, an investigation of the land will be made by archeologists and historians.

Spaniards Resented Intrusion

Since no one knows the exact location of the fort within the proposed park area, the government will try to find it. Centuries-old archives and writings indicate the French Huguenot settlers erected their stockade near the base of St. Johns Bluff, six miles from the river's mouth. But authorities fear the site may now be under water at a point where Army engineers diverted the course of the St. Johns 40 years ago.

Ill-fated Fort Caroline was regarded by Spaniards as a French challenge to their New World supremacy. The little moat-encircled stronghold could threaten the route used by Spanish treasure galleons along the east coast of Florida. Admiral Pedro Menendez de Avilés, Spain's redoubtable colonizer, was ordered to oust the intruders.

The French had only a toehold in the wilderness. They had landed and built their fort in 1564. Many were near starvation when Admiral Jean Ribault, leader of the Huguenot venture, returned with reinforcements in 1565. Shortly after his arrival Spanish vessels approached. Ribault and his ships gave chase, leaving the fort largely undefended.

It proved a tragic mistake. The wily Menendez was only some 30 miles to the south, where he had encamped at the present site of St. Augustine. He established a successful colony there, making St. Augustine the oldest permanent white settlement in the United States.

Storm Finishes French

Upon learning that the French ships were at sea, Menendez led his troops overland against Fort Caroline. Many of the defenders were surprised in their beds. The Spaniards killed more than 130 settlers, sparing only the women and children.

Meanwhile, a storm had wrecked the French ships on the Florida coast. Menendez hunted down the survivors and put them all to death, including Ribault. Spanish dominion of Florida continued without serious challenge until the 17th-century flood of English colonization.

Fort Caroline existed for only fifteen months, but it contributed several notable "firsts" to American history. The Spanish attack on the fort touched off the first international battle fought on United States territory. The settlement was the first in the United States dedicated to religious freedom. Nearly a dozen children were born there. These

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Soil erosion, particularly in the east, threatens Nepal's future. The government has proposed an erosion control dam on the Kosi River. Adequate hydroelectric power from the dam could make eastern Nepal a modern community with roads, railways, and industries.

Hinduism is the dominant religion, but there are also many Buddhists. The two faiths intermingle, many natives worshipping the same gods under different names. The central valley's Bagmati River is sacred to the Hindus, who strew the ashes of their dead on its waters.

Geologic studies indicate this valley was once the bed of a great lake. Nepal legend relates that a deity drained the waters by cleaving the mountains with one great sword stroke to form the Bagmati outlet.

NOTE: Nepal appears on the National Geographic Society's map of India and Burma. Write the Society's headquarters, Washington 6, D. C., for a price list of maps.

For further information, see "Peerless Nepal—A Naturalist's Paradise," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for January, 1950; "Nepal, the Sequestered Kingdom," March, 1935; and "The Aerial Conquest of Everest," August, 1933. And, in the GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, March 21, 1949, "Scientists Traverse Nepal's Rugged Roads"; and "Scientists Seek Wildlife Secrets in Nepal," October 18, 1948.

VOLKMAR WENTZEL

MUSTARD OIL FOR THE LAMPS OF NEPAL IS STORED IN THESE ALI BABA-LIKE JARS

Bulletin No. 3, December 11, 1950

Africa's Gulf of Guinea Edges Varied Lands

GEOGRAPHY'S great modern age of exploration and discovery might be said to have begun when wide-eyed European navigators first edged their way south along Africa's western bulge and entered the Gulf of Guinea. Here was a new world—jungles instead of forests, constant heat instead of changing seasons, black people instead of white.

The great right-angle gulf, which makes the west coast of Africa look as though it had been measured with a square, was not named then. In fact, the word Guinea was first applied to land, not water. It was derived from a similar-sounding name of a near-legendary native town in the region of the Upper Niger, inland from present Portuguese Guinea and French Guinea. These territories are near the westernmost bulge of Africa, far northwest of the Gulf of Guinea.

Terms Are Elastic

In its widest use, the Gulf of Guinea extends from Cape Palmas, on the border between Liberia and Ivory Coast, to Ponta Albina (white point), near the southern border of Portuguese Angola. In a narrower sense, the gulf is only the reach between Cape Palmas and Cap Lopez, a headland of the Gabon region of French Equatorial Africa.

The term Guinea Coast is even more elastic. The first European explorers considered themselves off Guinea after passing the Canary Islands. By the end of the 15th century (before Columbus had discovered America), the Portuguese seafarers had traced the entire west coast of Africa. Guinea was then confined to the reaches south of Senegal.

Today Upper Guinea is considered as beginning at the Casamance River, in south Senegal, and extending to the Cameroons (illustration, next page); Lower Guinea runs south from there to southern Angola.

Thus Guinea begins where Arabic and Hamitic peoples give way to Negroes, and where the sands of the Sahara are replaced by the grasses of the Sudan. Farther south, heavy rainfall causes dense rain forests.

Bits of Coast Named for Products

The coast is swampy. Except for lagoons, there are no good harbors. Lagos, port and capital of Nigeria (illustration, cover), is built on a lagoon. The wind blows inland from the sea from May to October, bringing the rains, five times as heavy as those of Washington, D. C. During dry months, the wind comes from inland. Though laden with dust, it is a refreshing change, and is known as the Harmattan.

Early traders named sections of the shore for outstanding products. Grain Coast, Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, and Slave Coast are labeled on many maps. The many-branched Niger River Delta, source of palm oil, was called the Oil Rivers. The "grain" of the Grain Coast was a spicy seed called the Grain of Paradise.

The race for trade brought many nations onto the scene, and some of them still are there. Though Guinea is one geographic province, it is hashed by colony and protectorate boundaries, usually drawn at right angles

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were the first births recorded in the United States for children of European ancestry, preceding by 22 years the birth of Virginia Dare at Sir Walter Raleigh's ill-fated colony on Roanoke Island, North Carolina.

The St. Johns Bluff area also is rich in later-day historical significance. British troops fortified the bluff in the American Revolution. Southern troops held the strategic site early in the Civil War.

But the tragic story of Fort Caroline remains the area's chief historical asset. In seeking clues to the location of the fort, historians long have pondered the drawings and writings left by Jacques le Moyne de Morgues, an artist and one of a handful of men who escaped the massacre by hiding in the woods. His drawings are a priceless record of Florida's Timucuan Indians, now a vanished tribe.

The French knew the St. Johns as the River of May. Mayport, fishing village at the mouth of the river, has a tablet commemorating the original landing there by Ribault. Legend says this courtly officer doffed his hat to the Spanish executioner and said, "I would be honored should you consent to retain this hat as a souvenir of our meeting."

NOTE: The St. Johns River may be located on the Society's map of the Southeastern United States.

For additional information on Florida, see "Miami's Expanding Horizons," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for November, 1950; and "Florida—Fountain of Youth," January, 1930; see also, in the GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, March 27, 1950, "Gulf Fleets Join Florida Shrimp Rush."

RICHARD B. HOIT

CYPRESS LUMBER PILED AT PALATKA, FLORIDA, AWAITS SHIPMENT DOWN THE NAVIGABLE ST. JOHNS

Bulletin No. 4, December 11, 1950

Ancient Alphabet Grew from Crude Pictures

AMERICAN children, learning their 26-letter ABC's with modern methods of word study, can be glad that reading and writing have come a long way toward simplification in the last few thousand years.

An alphabet of 74 phonetic characters and more than 50 ideographic signs was in use during the pre-Homeric period of the Greek King Nestor, according to a recent report by a University of Cincinnati archeologist who for some years has been literally digging into the subject.

Earliest Alphabet Writing Found on Sinai

These symbols, which now have been reproduced for study from tablets uncovered in the king's 3,000-year-old palace near Pylos, Greece, offer future decipherers a chance at the thrill of finding clues to the mysteries of early writing.

Similar clues on Sinai Peninsula were studied two years ago by Professor W. F. Albright of Johns Hopkins University. Sinaitic inscriptions dating from the 15th century B.C. form the oldest group of writings now known in our alphabet. From crude pictographs in use 3,500 years ago (illustration, next page) have developed the letters in which this article is written.

Various Peoples Credited

However, much of the story of the very first alphabet, and of how present-day alphabetical systems were evolved from it, has been lost in antiquity. At different times various ancient people of the eastern Mediterranean area, including Egyptians, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Cretans, Hebrews—and lately, certain early inhabitants of Syria and Palestine—have been nominated by authorities as the most likely inventors of this valuable knowledge tool.

The most ancient forms of writing were primitive picture drawings. Thousands of years ago, such drawings gradually came to include symbols of objects and ideas; then sounds of words and parts of words.

Phoenicians Spread Symbols

Egyptian hieroglyphic writing went further. It developed a number of single-consonant signs and other sound-indicating characters that led some scholars to argue that Egypt probably saw the first alphabet. The Egyptians, however, failed to make full use of their alphabet as a writing base, continuing to draw numerous and complicated word signs and guides to the sense of words. Hence, the old Egyptian system, like that of the Chinese, which to this day communicates meaning through many thousands of ideographs, is not counted a real alphabet.

Whatever people originated the alphabet, it is generally conceded that the Phoenicians prepared and launched it for world use. Those seagoing traders and craftsmen of the Mediterranean devised a simple, effective system of 22 letters.

In the process, the Phoenicians apparently took a selection of picture

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to the coast line and extending far inland. There is one free country—Liberia—established with help of the United States.

In the tepid waters of the Gulf of Guinea latitude zero crosses longitude zero. Between those two lines and the shore lie two open bays—the Bight of Benin and Bight of Biafra. A string of four islands cuts through the latter bight and into the gulf proper. They are the tops of the submerged Cameroons range. On land this range forms the boundary between Cameroons and Nigeria. It reaches 13,370 feet in Cameroons Mountain, just before it dips under water to reappear as Fernando Póo, Principe, São Tomé (illustration, inside cover), and Annobón.

NOTE: The Gulf of Guinea region may be located on the Society's map of Africa.

For further information, see "Rubber-Cushioned Liberia," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for February, 1948*; "Carefree People of the Cameroons" (18 photographs), February, 1947; "Nigeria: From the Bight of Benin to Africa's Desert Sands," May, 1944; "Timbuktu and Beyond," May, 1941; "We Keep House on an Active Volcano," October, 1939; "Trans-Africa Safari," September, 1938*; "Keeping House on the Congo," November, 1937. *(Issues marked with an asterisk are included in a special list of Magazines available to teachers in packets of ten for $1.00; issues unmarked are 50¢ a copy.)*

See also, in the GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, October 9, 1950, "Congo's Katanga Is Top Uranium Source"; "Africa's Gold Coast Exports More Than Gold," April 17, 1950; and "Belgian Congo Resources Spur Colonial Plan," November 21, 1949.

PIERRE ICHAC

ONE OF THE KING'S WIVES RUNS TO HER QUARTERS IN A CAMEROONS VILLAGE

A member of the pagan Bamileke tribe, she worships idols. However, most of her fellow countrymen are either Mohammedan (in the north) or Christian (in the south). Her husband-king provides each of his wives with one of these toadstool-shaped huts of mud and sticks.

Bulletin No. 5, December 11, 1950

Pompeii Continues to Yield Secrets

WHEN archeologists took up pick and spade, after World War II, to resume digging at Pompeii, they found that some of the bomb hits of that conflict were a benefit rather than a disaster. Target for Allied bombs had been a tourist hotel at the western edge of the ancient town which was used by the Germans.

The bombing uncovered a number of ruins missed by scientists who, for two centuries, had been working to restore ancient Rome's famous resort town on the Bay of Naples.

City Forgotten for Centuries

When Mt. Vesuvius violently erupted in 79 A.D., the thriving city of Pompeii was buried in a rain of stones and ashes. The explosion caught the city in full activity and preserved in ashes and mud much of what it engulfed. Thus it has been possible for Pompeii to emerge from its tomb to give people of today their most complete picture of life in a town of the first century.

For hundreds of years Pompeii lay forgotten under the piled-up debris of the eruption. It was not until the 17th century that curiosity was aroused in the existence of the ancient settlement. Peasants, poking about in the ruins, unearthed bits of statuary and other objects of interest. This attracted attention to the site.

In 1748 archeologists began the first systematic exploration of the town where Cicero and other noted Romans had built fabulous villas in the closing days of the Roman republic. Even today the work is little more than half completed.

In the shadow of Mt. Vesuvius, the dead city now raises roofless walls and columns of temples (illustration, next page), theaters, open-front shops, public baths, and private homes.

Now edging the modern town, the excavated city was already 600 years old when disaster struck. Pavement stones of its narrow, dusty streets still bear the imprints of ancient chariot wheels and horses' hoofs.

Visitors View Ancient Life

The fact that much of Pompeii had been rebuilt after a disastrous eruption of the volcano in 63 A.D. accounts for the surprising freshness of many of the buildings and their decorations. It also explains why so many of the structures of such an ancient city appear to have been built during the same period, instead of having been added to through the centuries. In this aspect, Pompeii is more like a modern, planned city, than an ancient one that has "just grown."

To thousands of visitors, Pompeii's undimmed paintings, court fountains, a child's scrawled words on an old wall, or inscribed announcements of first-century elections and entertainments, have offered graphic evidence of real people in a once-thriving commercial and resort settlement.

Pompeii, however, was not left intact after the tragedy in which some 2,000 of the city's 20,000 inhabitants lost their lives. Those who escaped and returned to save their possessions tunneled through the already heavy

characters of such everyday objects as an ox or camel; made crude letters of them, and gave them names. All consonants, this simplified, easy to read and write alphabet was used mainly for accounting purposes in business dealings.

Around 1,000 B.C., the Greeks took over the Phoenician system and further developed and improved it, particularly by the inclusion of true vowel sounds. Later, the Romans borrowed it, and created the handsome letter forms which, with only a few additions, are still in use after 2,000 years. Despite their obvious diversity, most of today's writing styles stem from the Roman letters.

Sinai Script	Sinai Script Represents	Hebrew	Greek	English
	Oxhead	א	A	A
	House	ב	B	B
	Fish	ד	Δ	D
	Man Praying	ה	E	E
	Fence	ח	H	H
	Palm of Hand	כ	K	K
	Oxgoad	ל	Λ	L
	Water	מ	M	M
	Serpent	נ	N	N
	Eye	ע	O	O
	Throw Stick	פ	Π	P
	Human Head	ר	P	R
	Bow	ש	Σ	S
	Mark of Cross	ת	T	T

At first the Romans used only capital letters. Small, or lower-case, letters developed through rapid or careless writing of the capital forms. Longhand, or cursive writing—the style used in personal letters and in notes to the milkman—developed last.

It is estimated that there have been around 400 different alphabets during the last 3,000 years. There are now some 50. The word "alphabet" itself comes from the first two units of the Greek system, *alpha* and *beta*.

NOTE: For further information, see "Sinai Sheds New Light on the Bible," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for December, 1948; "A New Alphabet of the Ancients Is Unearthed," October, 1930; and "Turkey Goes to School," January, 1929.

See also, in the GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, January 23, 1950, "Mt. Sinai Monastery Reveals Ancient Records."

LETTERS ARE STYLIZED PICTURES

Sinai writing, oldest now known, was a series of pictures. The oxhead, now stylized into the Roman letter A, became the first letter of the Phoenician alphabet. It was called *aleph*, meaning ox. In Greek, the first letter became *alpha*. Sinai's drawing of a house became the Phoenician letter *beth*, meaning house. This became the Greek *beta* and our B.

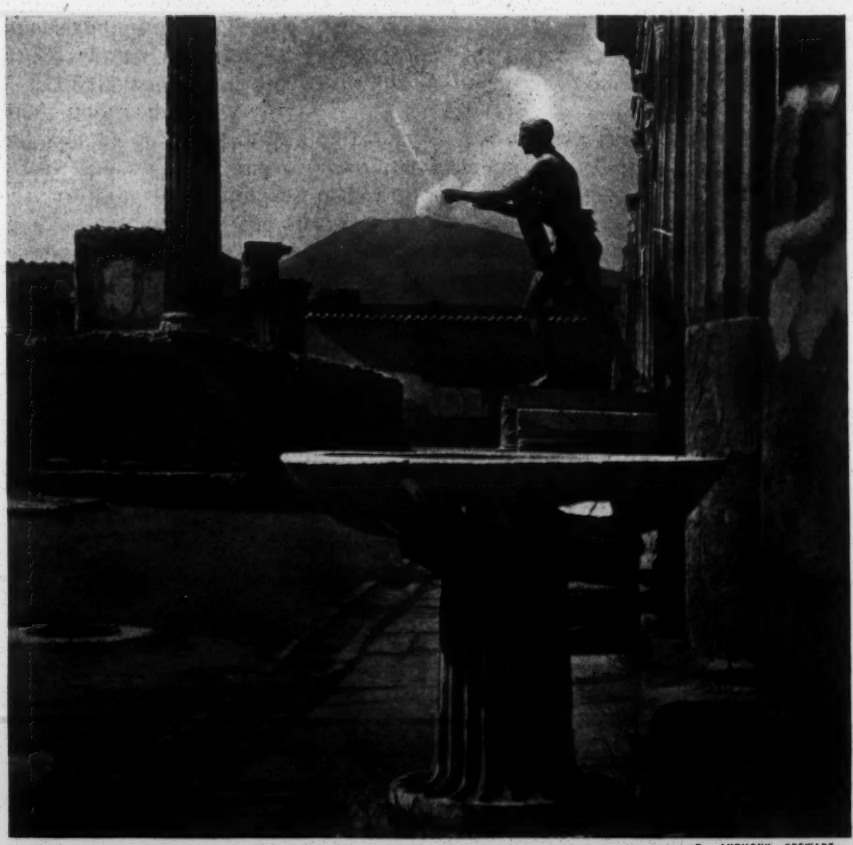
debris and cut holes in many of the houses to take out household goods and fortunes.

In early Pompeii excavations, everyday articles of interest and value were removed to the Naples National Museum or sold to private collectors. In modern exhibition showmanship, such instructive mementoes as kitchen utensils, mosaics, religious shrines, and surgical instruments have been left as they were found.

In the now-repaired museum building, where celebrations in 1948 commemorated the beginning of restoration, thousands of glass and other objects were shattered during attacks on near-by German positions. Many of these objects already have been mended.

NOTE: Pompeii may be located on the Society's map of Classical Lands of the Mediterranean.

For additional information, see "Italy Smiles Again," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for June, 1949; "Ancient Rome Brought to Life" (32 paintings) and "The Roman Way," November, 1946*; "Behind the Lines in Italy," July, 1944; "Italy, From Roman Ruins to Radio," March, 1940; "Augustus—Emperor and Architect," October, 1938; "Horace—Classic Poet of the Countryside," December, 1935; "Perennial Geographer" (Virgil), August, 1934 (out of print; refer to your library); and "Italy, Land of History and Romance," April, 1924.



B. ANTHONY STEWART

A STATUE OF APOLLO, COPY OF THE ORIGINAL, STANDS IN POMPEII'S TEMPLE OF THAT GOD